Embassy of India, Paris, rendered necessary assistance to the the stranded couple. On receipt of information, the official coordinated with the Airlines concerned and also contacted the relatives of the couple in India so that the needful could be done.

(c) Indian Missions/Posts abroad take up all complaints/problems of stranded Indians with the local authorities concerned and render all possible assistance to them.

Fishermen detained by Pakistan Security Agencies

1685. SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI:
SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Indian fishermen and boats are being taken into custody by the Pakistan Security Agency while fishing;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the number of fishermen presently detained and boats confiscated by Pakistan Security Agencies including for Gujarat State;

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to resolve this matter; and

(d) whether Government are considering signing an agreement with the Pakistan Authorities on the lines of the agreement between India and Sri Lanka?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) As per available information, 412 Indian fishermen with 75 boats are presently under Pakistan's custody.

(c) and (d) Government, through diplomatic channels, have been consistently taking up the issue of early release and repatriation of the Indian fishermen with Pakistan. The matter was also raised during the Foreign Secretary level talks on June 27-28, 2004 in New Delhi, and again during the Secretary (Culture) level talks on promotion of friendly exchanges in various fields, held in New Delhi on August 3-4, 2004. In the Joint Statement of June 28, 2004, the two sides agreed to take steps to release all apprehended fishermen in each other's custody, and work for the return of unintentionally transgressing fishermen and their boats from the high seas without apprehending them.